



News From:  
**U.S. Congressman John B. Larson**  
serving Connecticut's First District  
1008 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
221 Main Street, 2nd Floor  
Hartford, CT 06108

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 16, 2002**

## **LARSON BLASTS REPUBLICAN WELFARE BILL**

### ***Legislation Makes it More Difficult for People to Escape Poverty; Saddles Connecticut With a \$133 Million Unfunded Mandate***

WASHINGTON, D.C.- U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today voted against H.R. 4737, the Republican welfare reform authorization bill that would significantly limit the state's ability to move people off of welfare, forces many recipients into "make-work" activities instead of actual wage-paying jobs and fails to adequately fund child care -- providing barely enough to keep up with inflation. The legislation would also burden states with up to \$11 billion in unfunded mandates - including \$133 million for Connecticut.

Larson stated: "Connecticut and many other states are already facing budgetary difficulties, and this bill would impose a massive unfunded mandate of \$133 million on the state. At the same time, the legislation fails to provide the resources to assist families in escaping poverty and States the capacity to reduce the number of people on assistance. The Republican strategy for welfare reform re-authorization seems to be: 'if it isn't broken, try and fix it anyway, and in the process make the program more restrictive.' In fact, this legislation should have created greater opportunity for people to become educated, gain meaningful employment and incentivize them to leave public assistance programs. This legislation should not be about punishing the poor, it should be about further assisting those out of poverty and into work.

"I voted for the Democratic alternative because what we need to do is build on the present system by increasing the incentives for people to get out of poverty, not just off public assistance. The Democratic alternative would have promoted employment through grants to states, increased child care funding by \$11 billion over five years, counted vocational education and study leading to a GED as work participation requirements, promoted two-parent families and worked to reduce teen pregnancy," said Larson.

The Republican bill's unfunded mandates could force states to cut assistance to working families - such as child care - in order to meet the new requirements for welfare recipients, while 15 million American children are currently eligible for day care assistance but cannot participate because many states lack the necessary funding. The bill also restricts state discretion to provide education and training to recipients, and doubles the number of required work hours for mothers with children under the age of six, from 20 to 40 hours a week. Additionally, the Republican bill does nothing to provide additional assistance to people who leave welfare in the form of transitional health coverage so they are not left in poverty once they exit welfare. Also, the bill no longer even allows states to include vocational education as one of the work-related activities that can count towards their work requirement and continues to prevent assistance from going to legal immigrants.

The provisions for the Democratic Alternative to the Republican bill include:

## 1. Work Requirements